

The Cherokee Scout

The Official Organ of Murphy and Cherokee County, North Carolina.

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PUBLICITY IS GIVEN

MARBLE BELT IN W. N. C.

ble beds outcrop at a number of points but none of these exposures have been considered of importance, as the stone is, in most cases, badly sheared and broken. Between Toppin and Nantahala in the Red Marble Gap most of the stone has been covered by earth disturbance. There is, however, in this gap about one mile northeast of Toppin an outcrop of beautiful rose pink marble that should prove of interest. The deposit is small and has not been prospected sufficiently to indicate its size, but the quality and color of the stone in the outcrop warrant a complete investigation. At Hewitts the marble has been quarried for crushed stone and for making lime. Little is known of its value for building or monumental stone.

The portion of the marble belt most promising for the production of commercial stone, lies between Regal and Andrews. In this area

outcrop varies from 100 feet to nearly a mile in width. The overburden, which consists of soil and

stream wash, varies from 5 to 17 feet in thickness. In most cases there is ample room to dispose of overburden and waste. The surface of the stone is only slightly above stream level so that drainage in most cases is a problem. The stone itself is generally free from excessive jointing and is of uniform grade.

A quarry has been successfully operated at Regal, 3 1/2 miles northeast of Murphy, for several years. At this locality medium size blocks of marble of a general rectangular shape, guaranteed sound and free from natural defects, have been quarried. The width of the outcrop is about 1000 feet. The marble bed N. 45 degrees E. and dips 45 degrees to the southeast. The quarry has been developed to a depth of about 100 feet.

Between Regal and Marble Station the marble beds are continuous as shown by outcrops. Prospecting near Tomotla by core drilling showed about the same conditions as exist at Regal. Just east of Marble Station the marble beds attain their greatest width of outcrop, about three-fourths of a mile, and retain it with some variations to about one mile east of Andrews.

Near Marble Station prospecting, carried on by test holes so spaced as to determine the character of as much stone as possible, indicated beds fairly free from joint planes and lines of weakness. The texture, color, and general physical properties of the marble at this locality indicate a stone of commercial value.

In the vicinity of Coalville, about halfway between Marble Station and Andrews, prospecting has been done at two points in the past two or three years. The best information available is from the records of core drilling near Coalville.

The Regal Blue Marble Company, formerly operators of the quarry at Regal, some 60 acres were tested by core drilling to a depth of 100

feet. According to the records of Colonel Joseph Hyde Pratt who evaluated this prospecting, this is a

most promising site for opening a quarry. Important beds of both blue and white marble were encountered in the drilling. The marble is unusually free from joints and lines of weakness. Cores up to 40 feet long were taken from the drill holes without defects. The colors and grain of the marble is such as to make an attractive stone.

In the vicinity of Andrews there are some fair sized outcrops of marble. The stone is somewhat coarser in grain than that at Regal. The color is light to dark blue and usually uniform. Tests were made a short distance east of Andrews with a one-inch diamond drill. It is said that cores 5 to 7 feet long entirely free from joints or fractures were frequently taken out.

The quality of the marble found between Murphy and Andrews seems to be entirely satisfactory for building and monumental purposes. Two colors seem to predominate—a deep blue at times more or less streaked with white, and almost pure white. Some portions of the white beds are more or less variegated in color and have been referred to as Confederate Gray. At every point prospected in this area beds of blue and white marble are found. At Regal the blue seems to predominate and is the only one quarried successfully. At Marble Station beds of both blue and white were encountered. Near Coalville both colors outcrop in a width of 100 feet or more, each separated by beds of streaked or variegated colored material.

The texture or grain of the marble varies from medium to fine. It can hardly be said which texture predominates, Watson and Laney state that the medium grain stone predominates. Keith, on the other hand states that the grain of the marble is in all cases uniform and fine.

No weathering tests have been made on the marble; it, however, is a mixture of the carbonates of lime and magnesia and is as a result dolomitic in character. Marble composed of pure carbonate of lime increases readily with cold dilute hydrochloric acid while dolomitic marble is hardly affected and is next to insoluble in cold acetic acid. Both calcite marble and dolomitic are soluble in carbonic acid which is brought down in every drop of rain. Dolomitic is, however, less soluble in carbonic acid than calcite marble and should resist this weathering better, other factors being equal. The rock does not weather readily in its natural setting. Its upper surface and joint planes show signs of solution but the remaining rock is perfectly fresh and hard.

No extensive attempts have been made to measure its resistance to cold in a moist atmosphere. Keith, however, states that tests on the marble from Hewitts show that it is not liable to be acted upon by frost or solution.

The physical properties of the marble seem entirely satisfactory. Preliminary tests made by the Engineering Experiment Station of the North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering show an average crushing strength for both the blue and white varieties of some 20,000 pounds per square inch. It is hoped in the near future to complete a series of tests on the marble to determine its fitness for all uses to which marble is ordinarily put.

Mr. J. J. McClymont writing in the magazine, "Through the Ages," which is devoted to marble, in 1926 classified all stone into four groups, A, B, C, and D, with respect to size of quarried block, soundness of stone and cost of quarrying, and then described the commercial marble of the world. In the June, 1926 issue of this magazine he described the marble quarried at Regal, N. C., and listed it in his B class which is the second in cheapness of production and quality. He says "Regal Blue, quarried at Regal, N. C. Deep blue with small percentages of blue and white lines. Nos. 2 and 3 grade are similar. Is used principally for monumental work." His description of group B is as follows: "Marble sold to the trade in slabs or blocks of fair to medium size, generally rectangular in shape, guaranteed sound and free from internal defects."

Perhaps the best way to judge the attractiveness of a stone for building or monumental purposes is to see it in the monument or building. The Cherokee County officials re-

cently had a courthouse built in Murphy of the local marble. Part of the marble used in this courthouse was quarried at Marble and part near Coalville.

No attempt will be made to describe the building in detail. The exterior walls are built of the deep blue marble in a sand finish. The interior is finished with a baseboard of deep blue highly polished. Above this is a wainscoting of polished white (variegated.) The floors in the halls are a checkerboard pattern of marble tile cut from both the deep blue and the white. In front of the building are four columns 25 feet high by about 20 inches in diameter. Each of the columns consist of three pieces of marble turned from a solid block.

This building is described by practically everyone who sees it as unusually attractive both with respect to the stone used and the general outlines of the building.

Quarrying of marble has been carried on at Regal for several years by the Regal Blue Marble Company. This company has recently passed into new hands who are planning extensive quarrying operations near Coalville, in the central part of the marble belt in Cherokee County.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Last week when we started to take a proof of the mailing list to mail the paper out, we dropped the list and pied it—that is, mixed it all up—and took a shovel and shoveled it up in a box. This has caused some not to get their last week's paper. However, we have our list about straight again, and if you do not receive your paper let us know immediately, so that the matter can be straightened out. We regret the calamity to the list, and hope you will bear with us.

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